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ABSTRACT

The Norfolk, Virginia, Public Schools developed and implemented an innovative consumer and homemaking program for grades 6-8 based on the developmental characteristics of middle school children. This project was conducted under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Public Law 98-524. A committee of middle school teachers developed the model curriculum in conjunction with a curriculum specialist and an advisory committee. The new curriculum includes basic skills training, career education skills, computer skills, elimination of sex bias and stereotyping, incorporation of the needs of latchkey children, elements of family life education, standards of learning for grades 6-8, and leadership skills through membership in Future Homemakers of America (FHA). The curriculum was implemented in the 1989-90 school year with 9-week exploratory programs for sixth graders and 18-week courses for seventh and eighth graders. An FHA project developed by a student in the program won a first place ribbon. Pre- and post-evaluation surveys showed that students improved in knowledge of home economics exploration content areas and basic skills. The study concluded that the curriculum developed is a hands-on-activity package that includes all the elements specified in the project proposal. (KC)

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FINAL REPORT

MODEL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR CONSUMER AND HOMEMAKING EDUCATION

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CURRICULUM PROJECT

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Conducted Under
Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act
Public Law 98-524

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Norfolk Public Schools
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May 30, 1989

CE057126

This project was conducted in accordance with a contract with the Virginia Department of Education, Divisions of Vocational Education. Contractors undertaking projects under such sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Virginia Department of Education position or policy.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT: Model Middle School Program for Consumer and Homemaking Education

TIME FRAME: September 1, 1988 - May 30, 1989

OBJECTIVES:

1. To develop an innovative consumer and homemaking program grades 6-8, based on the developmental characteristics of the middle school child.
2. To implement a curriculum which includes basic skills training, career education skills, computer skills, elimination of sex bias and stereotyping, incorporation of the needs of the latchkey child, elements of family life education, Standards of Learning for grades 6-8, and leadership skills through membership in Future Homemakers of America.
3. To establish and work with an advisory committee composed of parents, students and other supportive personnel.
4. To provide at least one entry in the district FHA/HERO Proficiency Events.

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

1. A curriculum committee of middle school teachers and a curriculum specialist developed working units of study for six, seventh, and eighth grade exploratory Home Economics.

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Sixth-grade students have enrolled in 9 weeks exploratory programs, 7-8th grade placed in an 18 week introduction to teen living.
2. This curriculum will be implemented in Norfolk Public Schools as a complete program in 1989-90.

RESULTS:

1. Effort by the total group of middle school teachers has permitted the compilation of a viable curriculum which is suited to the specific needs of the middle urban school setting.
2. Six, seventh and eighth grade home economics students were able to obtain skills through use of a computer purchased through the grant. Programs and software provided home economics experiences which supplemented the curriculum.
3. An effective advisory committee consisting of 11 members met four times to assess, and give advise on the development of the curriculum. Valuable resources from the Dairy Council, Special Educational Services, parents and Basic Skills Committee provided information which led to the development of a productive curriculum.
4. An FHA project was submitted to the FHA STAR Proficiency Event in March. This project won a first place ribbon. The young lady is a student at Azalea Gardens Middle School which is one of the pilot schools. (Attachment)

EVALUATION:

Students participating in the 6-7-8th grade exploratory curriculum took a pre-evaluation and a post-evaluation survey. There was confusion by the students at the beginning of the exploratory class as to what the total Home Economics "picture" involved in relation to home life skills and careers. The post evaluation showed an improvement in knowledge of Home Economics exploration content areas and basic skills.

CONCLUSION:

The 6-7-8th grade curriculum provided by the curriculum committee is a "hands on" activity package which includes basic skills training, career education, computer skills elimination of sex bias, incorporation of the needs of the latchkey child, elements of family life education, standards of learning for grades 6-8 and leadership skills through membership in the Future Homemakers of America.

MODEL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

Norfolk Public Schools serves 6,564 sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Students are given an opportunity to explore home economics at all levels in middle school. In September, 1988, 6th graders were provided home economics education as an exploratory alternative. The middle school curriculum grant received from the state made it possible to produce a curriculum which was tested by four pilot schools and used by all middle school home economics teachers. A workable curriculum which suits the developmental needs of the sixth, seventh and eight grader has been a major concern because of changing life styles within the family unit. Administrators and teachers are committed to the true middle school model. This project enabled Home Economics to expand vocational training opportunities to the sixth grade student group. Recently upgraded graduation requirements limit most student's ability to enroll in secondary vocational courses, especially if they are college bound. Courses at the middle school level will be more accessible to those students. Roles and responsibilities in American society have changed dramatically during the past twenty years. For the first time in our history over 50% of mothers are in the job market. Curriculum materials need to reflect the changes in sex roles relevant to homemaking, new consumer trends and the needs of the latchkey children. Vocational education needs to incorporate state-of-the-art technology into classes and to promote the student's ability to function independently in the home environment.

This project provides a model curriculum for replication throughout the state.

The objectives for the project are: to develop an innovative consumer and homemaking program for grades 6-8, based on the developmental characteristics of the middle school child; to implement a curriculum which includes basic skills, elimination of sex bias an sterotyping, incorporation of the needs of the latchkey child, elements of family life education, Standards of Learning for grades 6-8, and leadership skills through membership in Future Homemakers of America; to establish and work with an advisory committee composed of parents, students, and other supportive personnel; to provide at least one entry in the district FHA-HERO Proficiency Events; and to evaluate project activities, document results and comply with the Department of Education reporting requirements.

The project consists of two components, curriculum development and curriculum implementation. The development of a homemaking curriculum began the summer of 1988. This work was expanded into a time line which included the school year September 1988 through May 30, 1989. Teachers from Rosemont, Lake Taylor, Azalea Gardens and Campostella worked on the curriculum committee under the guidance of a curriculum specialist who wrote the format. The four home economics teachers met with other middle school teachers, academic teachers and a committee from the basic skills project. Information concerning learning styles, developmental characteristics, family life education,

and care of the latchkey child were addressed by the total group. An advisory committee was formed in September and met four times during the school year. Members included parents, teachers, and local business representatives. The curriculum committee reviewed other middle school programs, ordered resource materials, a computer, and talked to all 6-7-8 grade home economics classes. The basic skills committee reviewed concepts which should be integrated into the curriculum and teachers were able to use a working copy of the 6-7-8 grade exploratory program by November.

Sixth graders in Norfolk were enrolled in nine week programs while 7-8 grades were enrolled in eighteen weeks. The seventh and eighth grades were mixed classes and were given the opportunity to take other vocational courses as well as home economics exploratory.

A micro computer was purchased in September which was placed at Azalea Middle School. Teachers received workshops and information on developing methods to work with the middle school child to enhance computer skills at this level. A unit of computer skills related to Home Economics has been included in the 7-8 grade exploratory curriculum. It is suggested through resources that the computer be used as an integral part of the exploratory Home Economics program.

A major interest area and motivator for the middle school child is participation in the Future Homemakers of America chapter. The chapter is organized as an integral part of each class with

five officers elected by class members. The five officers from each class serve as an advisory and planning group for the total chapter. Business matters which cannot be taken care of during the regular school day are handled by this group after school. Chapter meetings centered around guest speakers, video or filmstrip presentations, role-playing situations by class members and special activities designed around holiday celebrations.

An exciting event which led to some additional leadership development on the student's part was to participate in the Vocational Student Organization Fall Leadership Training Session. A song was written, practiced and presented as a "rap" to the officers from all FHA chapters officers in Norfolk. This was an exciting endeavor for middle school students to be able to perform for other students from all middle schools and senior high schools. The song was part of a gypsy scenario which looked into the future of the Vocational Student Organizations in Norfolk. It served as a motivator for the vocational clubs to foster cooperation, competition, service projects, develop decision-making skills, recreation, and fund-raising.

Students designed logos to be entered in a contest which led to the selection of a logo for the new vocational student organization. Five entries were entered from Azalea. All received praises for a job well done but none were selected as winners.

Service projects for the club included school beautification with students planting, weeding, and watering flowers on the school grounds. Students who participated in this became quite interested in the appearance of the grounds, and several carried flowers or seeds to plant at home. Another service project the chapter is involved in is the "Clothes Rack" which will be controlled by vocational student organizations in the city. Students at Azalea have begun collections for the "Clothes Rack" which is expected to open in the fall of 1989 to supply needy children at all grade levels.

Field trips for the students included a recreational trip to King's Dominion on a Saturday. This trip was a cooperative effort between FHA, the Azalea band and the computer club. A field trip to the vocational center to explore Home Economics course offerings available to them at the high school level took place in the early spring. This was organized in anticipation of scheduling courses at the high school level for the school year 1989-90.

Tamara Dorsett, a student from Azalea entered the proficiency events in the spring. Tamara entered in the job interview category and won a first place ribbon. Tamara's mother is on the middle school advisory committee.

Linkages with various groups at the schools made it possible to address critical issues involved in the education of the middle school child. The SREB Basic skills project provided infor-

mation beneficial to the curriculum writing. Academic teachers for 6-7-8 grades met in cluster groups to discuss methods and activities to enhance basic skills learning. Involving the Home Economics vocational teachers in the cluster groups served as an important link to providing content which promotes reading, writing, math, and social studies. This cluster linkage provided methods to identify characteristics and learning styles of the 6-7-8 graders.

Sixth grade students (90) were given an opportunity to complete a survey on items which should or should not be included in a home economics curriculum. There were three basic questions asked:

1. Which of the following items do you think would be included in a home economics class?
2. What do you look forward to more than anything else in home economics:
3. What would you like not to do in home economics?

The responses varied before and after instruction. The general consensus of the group surveyed indicated a preference in foods and clothing construction. These two areas seem to attract most young students who are not fully aware of the range of content in home economics. The sixth graders surveyed enjoyed the hands on activities which comprised the majority of the nine-week program. Energy and enthusiasm at this age is excessive and should be directed in learning experiences which enhance their development.

The project involved many long hours of meetings and curriculum

planning. Parents, community resource persons, educators both academic and vocational assisted in giving valuable information which provided for basic skills and content necessary for a viable home economics exploratory curriculum. The middle school student enrolled in the home economics exploratory program will be exposed to content which will introduce them to many home economics related careers; use reading, writing, and math skills while applying them to home economics concepts; be more prepared as a latchkey child to survive and care for younger children; understand basic nutritional facts and prepare snacks which can provide nutrients; understand the basic elements of family life education through the babysitting approach and to develop leadership skills through involvement in a local FHA chapter and competition at the regional level.

Norfolk has enrolled in 1988-89, 2,396 sixth graders, 2,232 seventh graders and 1,936 ninth graders. Of these totals, the four pilot schools held 1,150 of the sixth graders, 1,050 seventh graders, and 911 ninth graders. The new exploratory curriculum is intended to give a more hands-on approach to home economics. It should be looked at as an exciting and "fun" method to achieve learning. It is believed that the enrollment in senior high schools will increase due to a renewed interest by the middle school student.

PROFICIENCY EVENT
AZALEA MIDDLE SCHOOL

As a result of the unit of study on career development and perfecting babysitting skills, Tamara Dorsett took part in the FHA Proficiency Events at the middle school level.

Tamara is an assertive student whose poise and verbal skills are advanced for her age. Tamara and I met several times after school to review the requirements and plan strategies for preparing for the event. As a result of these planning sessions, assistance was sought from counselors, other teachers and Tamara's mother. The business teacher helped by providing assistance in writing application letters, the resume and follow-up letters. Tamara's mother helped her come up with a summary of experiences to include in her resume. She also helped a great deal by offering moral support. Three teachers who either have children or are expecting children practiced with Tamara for her interview. Each told her after the interview that they would be glad to hire her for a babysitting job.

After working with Tamara for a few weeks it became apparent that her biggest weakness is in written skills. When Tamara's mother realized her deficiencies in written skills, she hired a tutor to work with her. Even then Tamara did not seem to understand just how weak her writing skills are.

On the day of the events I picked Tamara up and we proceeded to

the proficiency event site. Since we had a 45 minute ride she spent her time reading over the papers she was to submit to the committee. We talked about what she might expect, analyzed her feeling of apprehension and tried to relax and know that she had prepared herself well.

The events went well for her. She met a number of new people from other cities. She felt very comfortable during the proceedings even though we were separated during the hours she was there. After the interview was over we discussed what had taken place. She indicated she felt good about the interview, but a follow-up letter had to be copied twice.

Tamara won a first place ribbon, which pleased both of us. On the way home we evaluated the process she had gone through to prepare for the event. I explained to her that I hoped she gained two things out of the experience; that she appreciates the fact that she has an unusual gift for poise and verbal skills; the other, to realize that she needs to work on her written skills. I think she does realize this as she is now working diligently with her tutor.

As an additional practice with her written skills she wrote thank-you notes to all the teachers who helped prepare her for event. The teachers were impressed by the thank-you notes Tamara wrote.

Mildred Manger, Instructor
Azalea Middle School

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROJECT
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MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROJECT
ROSEMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 29, 1988

A G E N D A

Refreshments

Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Project Review and Objectives

Curriculum Planning

Other

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, POST OFFICE BOX 1357, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23501

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROJECT
Rosemont Middle School
3:00 p.m.
January 26, 1989

AGENDA

1. Refreshments

2. Introduction of Guests

3. Review Project Objectives

4. Review Current Status

5. Discussion

6. Closing

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, POST OFFICE BOX 1357, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23501

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROJECT
CAMPOSTELLA MIDDLE
FEBRUARY 22, 1989
3:00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. Refreshments

2. Review of previous meeting

3. Current information on curriculum

4. Discussion

5. Closing

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MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM PROJECT
NORFOLK TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL CENTER
APRIL 6, 1989
3:00 PM

A G E N D A

Review of Project Status

Reports by Various Committees

Review of Curriculum Materials

Comments from Committee Members

Other

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, POST OFFICE BOX 1357, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23501

SIXTH GRADE CURRICULUM SURVEY

1. Which of the following items do you think would be included in a home economics class? Place a check by those you think would be included.

_____ 1. Making friends

_____ 2. Getting along with family members

_____ 3. Following rules

_____ 4. Sewing by hand

_____ 5. Making nutritious snacks

_____ 6. Using time wisely

_____ 7. Using a globe

_____ 8. Using fractions

_____ 9. Doing multiplication, division, addition and subtraction

_____ 10. Measuring distances

_____ 11. Following directions

_____ 12. Reading

_____ 13. Writing

_____ 14. Learning vocabulary

_____ 15. Repairing garments

_____ 16. Learning to babysit

_____ 17. Using kitchen appliances

_____ 18. Learning grooming skills

_____ 19. Learning to be responsible when left home alone

_____ 20. Learning leisure time activities

2. What do you look forward to more than anything else in home economics?

3. What would you like not to do in home economics?

SUMMARY OF SIXTH GRADE CURRICULUM SURVEY

Total number of respondents - 90

Question #1

ITEM	RESPONSES BEFORE INSTRUCTION	RESPONSES AFTER INSTRUCTION
1.	50	76
2.	61	79
3.	80	90
4.	90	90
5.	90	90
6.	37	52
7.	6	0
8.	41	67
9.	41	73
10.	22	82
11.	86	90
12.	69	90
13.	25	90
14.	20	80
15.	87	90
16.	63	85
17.	90	90
18.	74	90
19.	79	88
20.	52	90

Question #2

RESPONSES BEFORE INSTRUCTION			RESPONSES AFTER INSTRUCTION		
Foods	-	75	Foods	-	70
Sewing	-	12	Sewing	-	6
Crafts	-	3	Crafts	-	14

Question #3

RESPONSES BEFORE INSTRUCTION			RESPONSES AFTER INSTRUCTION		
Reading and Writing	-	70	Reading and Writing	-	86
Cleaning	-	8	Cleaning	-	0
Washing Dishes	-	4	Washing Dishes	-	4
Undecided	-	8	Undecided	-	0